

2024 BCMB EDI Committee Annual Report

Prepared by Doug Briant (EDI Committee Chair) utilizing Caroline Cameron's report template. Revised by EDI committee members and approved on June 10, 2024

Current EDI Committee Members:

Doug Briant (Chair, Faculty)
Lisa Reynolds (Acting Chair January-April, Faculty)
Caren Helbing (Faculty)
Dave Goodlett (Faculty)
Courtney Gauthier (Graduate Student)
Emily Howard (Undergraduate Student)
Anita Thambirajah (Grant-Funded Research Staff)
Aditya Mojumdar (Grant-Funded Research Staff, started August 2023)
Adrienne White (Staff)

EDI Committee meetings conducted during the period of May 2023-April 2024:

June 08, 2023
August 2023 (meeting postponed to October)
October 27, 2023
December 05, 2023
February 07, 2024
April 03, 2024

Overview of EDI committee discussions and progress during the period of May 2023-April 2024: The BCMB EDI committee continued their work on EDI-related topics at bi-monthly meetings from June 2023 – April 2024, with the August meeting cancelled. During this time, the progress made by the EDI committee included:

- Updated the Terms of Reference to allow additional members and encourage people on the committee to step aside after two consecutive terms.
- Progress has been made on mentorship files for undergraduates and grant-funded staff.
- Grant-funded staff are now represented in Departmental Meetings.

Recommendations from the EDI Committee to BCMB stemming from committee discussions over the period of May 2023-April 2024:

1. Updated the terms of reference regarding committee composition:

- will stay with 1 undergraduate learner, 1 graduate learner and 1 grant-funded researcher, but will also allow for 2 additional members among this group to encourage participation and possibly increase diversity
- language was added to the terms of reference encouraging members to step aside after 2 consecutive terms. It does not mean they are stepping away permanently as they can rejoin after a one term break=.

2. Faculty of Science EDI Climate Survey

- an early version of the results was released, but privacy concerns arose as information was included that was not supposed to be included.

- the data was not grouped correctly, and all faculty results were listed as BCMB results.
 - at this time, no further data has been released.
3. ***Undergraduate Mentorship***
 - progress was made on the undergraduate plan, but the program is still in development
 - the BMSS has taken the lead on the undergraduate mentorship plan, with potential mentors ready to go. Training needs to be decided and implemented. The BMSS proposed formalizing credit for mentors through the Co-curricular record program.
 4. ***Grant-funded Researcher Mentorship***
 - this was discussed in the February meeting, and an initial draft was made by Aditya.
 - this is a diverse group, so they have a range of career goals.
 - in some ways, this group is vulnerable due to their unique terms of employment (or lack thereof).
 - the final version may look more like a resource guide than a mentorship plan, or the plan may be split for researchers with and without PhDs.
 5. ***Inclusion of Grant-funded Researchers at Department Meetings***
 - one grant-funded researcher now attends department meetings.
 - this is a non-voting position.
 6. ***Departmental EDI Seminar***
 - the committee hosted Mami Schouten to give a departmental seminar.
 - Mami Schouten is the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Research Officer from the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation at Uvic
 7. ***EDI Website Changes/Improvements***
 - the website is a standing item, and improvements or concerns are addressed throughout the year.
 - currently, we post PDFs of articles that may be of interest. This may contravene copyright rules, so in the future links will be posted. There may be issues that arise using external resources and this may have to be addressed in the future.
 - changes have been forwarded to Kimberley, and they should be complete in time for the June EDI Committee meeting.
 8. ***Grad Liaison Position***
 - this position appears to obsolete, and the EDI committee suggested it be discontinued.

EDI Committee priorities for the period of May 2024-April 2025:

1. Continue to update/revise the BCMB EDI website, with relevant EDI content.
2. Continue to suggest and invite BCMB Seminar Speakers with a focus on inclusivity, diversity, and EDI. We should also encourage all members of BCMB, not just Faculty, to suggest possible speakers.
3. Mentorship plans
 - implement undergraduate mentorship cafes in the upcoming academic year
 - increase student exposure to departmental advisors
 - work on a staff mentorship plan

4. Undergraduate learners are still struggling with the current system of finding Honours supervisors. The committee will explore initiatives to clarify processes and try and find ways to bring learners and supervisors together.
5. Work on introducing more inclusive social engagement opportunities for the department.
6. Develop a BCMB-centric plan from the Faculty of Science Indigenization Plan.
7. The Faculty Indigenous Hiring plan is moving forward. No candidates were identified for BCMB at this time, but we should work to support these hires even though they will be outside the department. The committee should plan to support future hires and determine how to bring the goals from the Faculty Indigenization plan into our department.